NELSON CITY COUNCIL

LGOIMA Response – No Ratepayer Impact Modelling; Limited Comparative Analysis

Official Information Request SR 2623184 | Response dated 23 July 2026

1. Purpose of this Note

This note records the formal response of Nelson City Council to a Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 request concerning expenditure on flood and coastal hazard work, comparative analysis of infrastructure protection versus managed retreat pathways, and modelling of long-term impacts on ratepayers and council revenue. It is prepared as a public-interest transparency record.

2. Request Summary

The request (dated 30 June 2026) sought:

- Total expenditure by Nelson City Council on external consultants, advisors, or contractors for work related to flood protection, stormwater, coastal hazard assessment, managed retreat, property acquisition, or climate adaptation planning from 1 July 2020 to the present, with breakdown by financial year and major project/area where possible.
- Any reports, briefings, technical assessments, or analysis prepared since 2020 comparing or assessing the costs, benefits, risks, or long-term outcomes of major infrastructure protection options versus managed retreat, property acquisition, or voluntary buyout pathways in Nelson.
- Any modelling or advice on the long-term impacts on ratepayers, property values, or council revenue from large-scale property acquisition or managed retreat in the city.

3. Key Formal Responses by Nelson City Council

3.1 Expenditure (Question 1)

Refused. The Council stated the information is not readily available, would require analysis of existing information to create a new set of information, and that to the extent the request qualifies under LGOIMA it would require substantial collation and research. The Council stated it does not have the resources available to carry out that work.

3.2 Comparative analysis (Question 2)

The Council narrowly scoped the request to information which "directly compares major infrastructure protection options as against managed retreat, property acquisition, or voluntary buyout pathways." On that basis it released one project-level options report:

3995 Hillwood Stream – Options Report Final – Envirolink – 24 March 2025

No city-wide or strategic comparative analysis of infrastructure protection versus managed retreat pathways was provided. The Council noted that a further request for broader material could be made, although charges may apply.

3.3 Ratepayer / property-value / revenue modelling (Question 3)

Formal written admission:

"No modelling or advice received in relation to the above question."

4. Significance

This response adds a further data point to the national pattern:

- Expenditure transparency on flood, stormwater, coastal hazard, and adaptation-related consulting was resisted on collation/resource grounds.
- No strategic or city-wide comparative analysis of major infrastructure protection options versus managed retreat or property acquisition pathways was released.
- The Council formally stated that it has received no modelling or advice on the long-term impacts on ratepayers, property values, or council revenue from large-scale property acquisition or managed retreat.

The Question 3 admission is unambiguous and consistent with responses from other councils and central agencies.

5. Source Document

Nelson City Council letter, Ref: SR 2623184, 23 July 2026, from David Light, Manager Asset Planning. Enclosure: 3995 Hillwood Stream – Options Report Final – Envirolink – 24 March 2025.

Public-interest transparency record prepared from primary LGOIMA response material. July 2026.